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BRIEFING

WHAT'S WRONG WITH U.S. INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

The problems that plague the intelligence community are so deeply rooted that only fundamental changes can improve performance



BY ALAN E. GOODMAN

The recent campaign for the White House marked the latest attempt to overhaul the intelligence community. The American intelligence community's performance was a major issue.

From last summer's election to President Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski all left offices thinking intelligence had not served them well.

Moreover, over these two decades in the Senate and House Select Commissions on Intelligence have been sharply critical of the executive branch's intelligence performance.

As early as 1962, the Senate Intelligence Committee's report was widely criticized by House Democrats. The committee's report was so widely criticized that it was eventually buried in a stack of papers.

James told several officials that the U.S. intelligence community's performance was at its lowest level since Pearl Harbor.

And in the wake of the worst case of spying by the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, President Carter himself expressed concern about the intelligence community's performance.

Intelligence and foreign-policy professionals should take such criticism seriously, despite the political circumstances and realize that they have performed it.

Many intelligence operations have left the profession wondering if the community has become

the fragmented, sophisticated collection techniques have actually impeded the sharing of information. And rival agencies in self-competition for financing prevent such development.

Unfortunately, such problems have plagued the intelligence community for more than a decade and are so deeply rooted that only fundamental change in the system will improve performance.

The quality of intelligence provided by the community has been seriously questioned for some time. There have been at least 20 alleged intelligence failures promulgated by Congress or the press since 1980.

There the White House has not persuaded the director of central intelligence to release an unclassified version of the CIA's review of the intelligence community's performance. It is responsible to complete a track record.

But it is not surprising that the failure of other personnel and the way of their briefings and the way of their strategic, diplomatic, or economic importance to the United States.

American intelligence has frequently exhibited Soviet behavior and capabilities — targets of highest priority. U.S. intelligence officials are often misled by the Soviet intelligence community.

It is not surprising that Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev's deployment of offensive missiles in Cuba in 1962, the movement to Khar'kov, Leningrad and Yuri Andropov; the level of Soviet domestic spending; and Soviet economic growth and production.

The intelligence community

also hampered the resolution of the Argentine and the Soviet or Cuban intelligence "successors" in Cuba in 1979. Such misjudgments have all been extremely costly to U.S. security.

U.S. intelligence agencies also have failed to anticipate military actions and to identify tactics and targets in Latin America. The intelligence community has rarely provided correct information for use by one state to achieve its aims over another.

These failures include the North Korean attack on South Korea in 1950, the risk to the USS Liberty of Israel air attack if the ship contained a surveillance mission during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the risk to the USS Pueblo of its surveillance activities near North Korea waters in 1968, the objective of the T-14 submarine in Vietnam in 1968, the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, the Argentine seizure of the Falkland Islands (Gulf of Mexico) and the subsequent British sailing of the Argentine cruiser *Belgrano*, and the efforts by Iran and Iraq to control the oil fields and support facilities in the Persian Gulf war broke out.

In each of these cases, misperceived or mistaken policy also was at fault. But to blame the policy-maker for the failure is merely to shift the blame to the intelligence community's performance.

However, the policy-maker

reached their conclusions, they were guided by faulty intelligence analysis or poorly served by the slow or incomplete dissemination of reports by the intelligence community.

The most badly defined intelligence failure of the 1970s was the Iran hostage crisis. A series of failures about with a vacillating policy toward the state led to the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in November 1979 and destroyed vital American economic and security interests in the region.

To be sure, at the commission who accepted the CIA's position on Iran's later discovery, set a major process in the case of Iranian revolution, the success of Ayatollah Khomeini's Revolution have

varied from predicted correctly, but U.S. intelligence agencies and their analyses failed even to cover Iran.

The episode raised Jimmy Carter to lead the following intelligence community to the Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci, and the Director of Central Intelligence, Admiral Stansfield Turner.

All the major level, now present

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When Pressure Forces a CIA Officer to Quit



BY JOHN HORTON

Nothing will get an intelligence officer's back up faster than a matter of this kind of pressure in his life. It is a matter of personal judgment to make them more palatable to be reporters or to refuse the duty of approval on an administration's policies.

A National Intelligence Estimate is not merely an intelligence report or a list of statistics, nor should it be any one man's opinion. It is the product of the deliberation of representatives of all the intelligence agencies dealing with foreign affairs.

As a member of the National Intelligence Council, the national intelligence officer chairs the writing of the estimate. This may be his most influential role as a member of the intelligence community.

Let me give you a personal example of the pressure put on me as a member of the intelligence community by the director of central intelligence — William Casey — to come by with a National Intelligence Estimate on Mexico that would satisfy him.

This is not the first time that pressure has been put on me as a member of the intelligence community to come by with what their superiors consider to be the right answer.

A previous director not long ago remarked that he was roundly "thrilled" with the estimate on the Soviet Union. And that was being written under a deadline that was not passing in the policy-makers' eyes. The estimate didn't say that our policy in Vietnam was wrong.

In my own case, it was not that the policy-makers were putting pressure on the director, but rather that the pressure was on me and others working on the Mexico

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GREAT DECISIONS '85
Starting Next Week

This year marks the 25th year of the Great Decisions program, a biennial symposium by the Foreign Affairs Council, part of the Heritage Foundation. The program, which consists of eight weekly meetings in Washington, D.C., is a unique opportunity for Americans to discuss important U.S. foreign policy issues.

Starting next week, subject material related to the twenty Great Decisions issues will run in the briefing notes. The subject for discussion in the first week will be "The Twenty Great Decisions: A Review of U.S. Foreign Policy Issues."

Great Decisions '85 is sponsored jointly by the World Affairs Council of Northern California in cooperation with the Foreign Policy Association, a non-partisan, non-partisan organization. It is a pleasure to have your participation in these events.

Participants in Great Decisions will receive their views in open and frank discussion at the weekly meetings. The topics will be discussed and reviewed in the briefing notes and the weekly briefing notes.

Discussion groups are still being formed and telephone reservations for the weekly issues are being accepted. All decisions on Great Decisions '85 can be obtained from the World Affairs Council, 2222 Broadway, Suite 200, San Francisco, CA 94133.